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**Obispos y catedrales.
Arte en la Castilla
bajomedieval**

*Bishops and Cathedrals.
Art in Late Medieval
Castile*



PETER LANG

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MARÍA VICTORIA HERRÁEZ

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The Episcopal Imprint in the Cathedral of San Antolín in Palencia. The Construction of a Gothic Chevet (1321–1460)¹

La huella episcopal en la catedral de San Antolín de Palencia. La construcción de una cabecera gótica (1321–1460)

ABSTRACT: The see of Palencia was a destination coveted by bishops, as it represented an important step in the *cursus honorum* towards the most prestigious sees of the kingdom: Seville and Toledo. Besides, it was the fifth in the kingdom as far as the amount of its revenues was concerned, the lordship over the city was attached to it and its prelates held the title of counts of Pernía.

In many cases the episcopal participation in the construction tasks was basic, as, although the prelates were frequently away and had to leave the burden of their church's organization, to a large extent, in the hands of their chapter members, they showed great interest in promoting works which would contribute to increase the splendour of their see and enhance their own personal prestige.

The Gothic cathedral of Palencia is a clear example of this behaviour and one of the buildings where the construction process can be followed more closely through the imprint left in it by its bishops. Therefore, we have set out to revise and study its documentary and chronic sources, the coats of arms which can be spotted in the temple and its architectural structures themselves in order to go deep into the episcopal patronage and understand a little better the building history of the chevet in the San Antolín church.

RESUMEN: La diócesis palentina era un destino ambicionado por los obispos, pues constituía un escalón importante en su *cursus honorum* hacia las sedes más prestigiosas del reino: Sevilla y Toledo. Además, era la quinta del reino de Castilla por la cuantía de sus rentas, llevaba aparejado el señorío sobre la ciudad y sus prelados ostentaban el título de condes de Pernía.

1 The present paper has been carried out in the frame of the I+D+I Research Project *El patronazgo artístico en el reino de Castilla y León (1230–1500). Obispos y catedrales*, Ref. HAR2013-44536-R, financed by the Spanish Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad and ERDF Funds.

La participación episcopal en las tareas edilicias fue, en muchos casos, sustancial pues, aunque las frecuentes ausencias de los prelados les obligaran a derivar el peso de la organización de su iglesia, en gran medida, hacia los capitulares, mostraron gran interés por promover obras que contribuyeran a engrandecer el esplendor de la sede y acrecentaran su propio prestigio personal.

La catedral gótica de Palencia es un claro ejemplo de este comportamiento y uno de los edificios en donde el proceso de construcción puede seguirse con más claridad a través de la huella que han dejado sobre él los obispos. Por ello, nos hemos propuesto revisar y analizar las fuentes documentales y cronísticas, las armerías que campean en el templo y las propias estructuras arquitectónicas de la iglesia con el fin de profundizar en la labor de patronazgo episcopal y comprender un poco mejor la historia constructiva de la cabecera de la iglesia de san Antolín.

The construction of a Castilian cathedral in the Late Middle Ages was managed by an institution which was subordinated to the cathedral chapter and worked with a budget line of its own: the *Obra*². The *canónigo obrero* (canon worker) was in charge of it and ultimately responsible for administering the income and distributing it to the different activities depending on this body. Basically they were the preservation and repair of the building, the acquisition and maintenance of the objects necessary for religious worship, and the payment of salaries to some officials and servers of the temple.

Although the *Obra* was managed by the cathedral chapter, the greatest authority of a diocesan church was its bishop. So it was his job to come up with the initiatives he considered appropriate, and all major decisions must be subject to his consent. It is true that the episcopal patronage must not rule out the recognition of the work carried out by some canons. The efforts of the “worker canons” to raise funds, supervise and even direct the works in some aspects, should not be disregarded either. However, although the prelates were frequently away and had to leave the burden of their church’s organisation, to a large extent, in the hands of their chapter members, in general they showed great interest in promoting new constructions which would contribute to increase the splendour of their see and enhance their own personal prestige. The bishops’ involvement in the building of their major temples was decisive for the success of some projects, and in many cases they wanted to register their participation by leaving their coats of arms, commemorative inscriptions and, even, representations of themselves in their constructions.

2 “The Works”. The *Obra* was both a physical workshop and an institution, with its own sources of income.

The Gothic cathedral of Palencia is a clear case of this behaviour and one of the buildings where the construction process can be followed in detail through the episcopal imprint, as has been highlighted by some authors³.

The see of Palencia was a destination coveted by bishops, as it represented an important step in the *cursus honorum* towards the most prestigious archbishoprics of the kingdom: Seville and Toledo⁴. Besides, it was the fifth in the Crown of Castile as far as the amount of its revenues was concerned, after those of Toledo, Seville, Burgos and Santiago de Compostela; the lordship over the city was attached to it, and, after 1410, its prelates held the title of counts of Pernía⁵. This lordship gave them power and wealth, but it became the cause of serious conflicts between the episcopate and the city council, which resulted in an increasing royal interference in the appointment of aldermen⁶.

All this has led us to revise and analyse the documentary and chronicle sources, the episcopal coats of arms that can be seen in the temple, and the temple architectural structures themselves, in order to deepen the history of its construction a little further. Among the documentary and chronicle sources, we must point out the existence of chapter minutes since 1412, although quite a few books are missing and there remain some significant gaps, which have been occasionally filled by chroniclers and historians who were still able to see the original documents. The council minutes do not give direct information about the relations between the cathedral

3 Particularly R. MARTÍNEZ GONZÁLEZ, “La catedral y los obispos en la Baja Edad Media (1250–1469)”, in *Jornadas sobre la catedral de Palencia*, Palencia, 1989, pp. 43–66.

4 In fact, very few finished their lives in this diocese; from 1397, when Juan de Castro-mocho died, until the death of Luis Cabeza de Vaca, in 1550, no bishop was buried in the city of Palencia.

5 The ceremonial entrance to the city in the late Middle Ages is very well known (A. POLANCO PÉREZ, *La catedral de Palencia en el siglo XV (1402–1470). Poder y comportamientos sociales a finales de la Edad Media*, Valladolid, 2008, pp. 57–59). There is a detailed description of the reception of Bishop Alonso de Burgos in ACP, *Actas Capitulares*, Libro 34, fols. 99r. and v.; *Libro de Estatutos*, fols. 229v.–230v.

6 The confrontations can be perceived all along the 15th century. Already in 1412 the legal representative of Sancho de Rojas collected the privileges mentioning the lordship of the bishop and the cathedral chapter in the city of Palencia to present them in a lawsuit against the city council (ACP, loose folios, 1412, n° 74). On the bishop’s relationship with it in the 15th century, the reader is referred to M. J. FUENTE PÉREZ, *Palencia. Cien años de vida y gobierno de la ciudad (1421–1521) a través de las Actas Municipales*, Palencia, 1987.

chapter and the city and about the masters working in the building. Finally, also the Vatican Archives supply facts, above all through the requests sent to the pontiff and the bulls issued from Rome.

We can differentiate two quite distinct periods in the construction story of the cathedral: the 14th century, when the project was gestated but its construction hardly progressed, and the 15th century, which was the real time of building activity there, so that around 1500 the temple was virtually concluded. In this paper we address the cathedral works in relation to the Palencia bishops until 1460, when Don Pedro de Castilla's bishopric finished and the chevet of the temple was completed after many difficulties and hesitations.

The 14th Century: How a Project was Worked Out

On June 1st, 1321, the bishop of Sabina, cardinal and legate of Pope John XXII, Don Guillermo, laid the foundation stone of the Gothic cathedral in the presence of his counterparts of Palencia, Cordova, Plasencia, León, Segovia, Zamora, and Bayonne⁷. Some reasons can be provided to justify the renovation of a Romanesque temple, the consecration of which had taken place, with the same solemnity, only 100 years earlier (1219)⁸. In the agreement reached in 1318 to build a new church, Bishop Don Gómez Peláez and the cathedral chapter argued that the previous building was in a very bad condition⁹. That was possibly the case, but it may not have

7 P. FERNÁNDEZ DEL PULGAR, *Historia secular y eclesiástica de la ciudad de Palencia*, Madrid, 1679; rep. Palencia, 1981, lib. III, fol. 3.

8 On March 22, 1219, Pope Honorius III issued a bull by which he gave the authorisation to grant indulgences to the bishops who attended the solemn dedication of the Palencia cathedral, about which he says: “cum nobili structura erecta esse dicatur de novo ecclesia palentina...” (ACP, Fábrica, armario I, leg. I, n^o 3. *Cfr.* M. VIELVA RAMOS, *La catedral de Palencia*, Palencia, 1922, p. 9; R. MARTÍNEZ, “La lenta construcción de un gran templo. La catedral en la época gótica”, in *La catedral de Palencia. Catorce siglos de Historia y Arte*, Burgos, 2011, pp. 185–186).

9 The foundation stone laying ceremony took place on June 1st, 1321, but, actually, already in 1318 Bishop Don Gómez and the chapter had agreed to construct a new building, arguing the bad condition of the Romanesque church (ACP, Histórico, 837, fol. 48r.). Besides, the *undécima carga de pan* (a wheat tax) to the construction of

been the only reason that pushed the chapter, led by the bishop, to embark on a great building enterprise. I am referring to the fact that in two of its neighbouring dioceses, Burgos and León, as well as in the spiritual capital of the kingdom, Toledo, already large churches emerged that had been built following the *opus francigenum*, and their bulks, standing above the skyline of the city, evidenced the power of their respective sees. Finally, we must not forget that Valladolid, although at the time was not a diocesan head, was becoming more and more important already since the end of the 13th century. So Palencia needed to consolidate its hegemony as regards the Pisuerga city, and one of the symbols of the strength was a major church capable of competing with the renewed Valladolid Collegiate Church of Santa María¹⁰.

According to the sources, it was Bishop Don Gómez Peláez (1313–1319) who took the initiative of promoting the new construction, but it was his successor in the see, Juan Fernández de Limia (1320–1330) who presided over the foundation stone laying three years later, taking the advantage that the legate sent by Pope John XXII was in the city to mediate in the pacification of the realm, and that several bishops were there too, as was mentioned above. The delay to activate the works in the cathedral or, perhaps, only that of the foundation stone laying, which may have been more a symbolic act than a real one, may have been due to various reasons, among which we must remember the conflicts occurred in Castile during the minority of Alfonso XI. But economic reasons would not be minor either. Thus, for example, when, in 1318, Don Gómez proposed that three *cargas* of wheat, out of the total amount of the tithes owed by each parish, were given to the *Obra*, encountered the resistance of the clergy, archbishops and monarchs, who were not prepared to see diminished their participation in the tithes¹¹.

The building project contemplated the execution of a temple comprising a nave and two aisles, with transepts which did not stand out in the building ground plan, a sanctuary compound of two bays which gave way to a main chapel, with five sides plus a straight part, surrounded by

the new cathedral was established (A. GARCÍA Y GARCÍA, *Synodicon Hispanum. VII. Burgos y Palencia*, Madrid, 1997, p. 350).

10 A sample of the importance Valladolid was gaining as a diocesan centre was the celebration of the 1322 council in that city. That council issued various measures for the reformation of the Spanish clergy (A. GARCÍA Y GARCÍA, *Op. cit.*, Madrid, 1997, p. 349). One of the symptoms of the desire to counter that emerging force is the literature devoted to praise the diocese of Palencia, with examples like the *Mocedades de Rodrigo* (R. MARTÍNEZ, “La lenta construcción...”, pp. 202–288, especially, p. 202).

11 ACP, n° 837, fols. 48–49.

an ambulatory with five radiating chapels and two small rectangular ones. As it was customary in renovations, the new sanctuary was to be found to the east of the old one, which allowed for maintaining the liturgy in the main Romanesque chapel until the Gothic sanctuary was finished (Fig. 1).

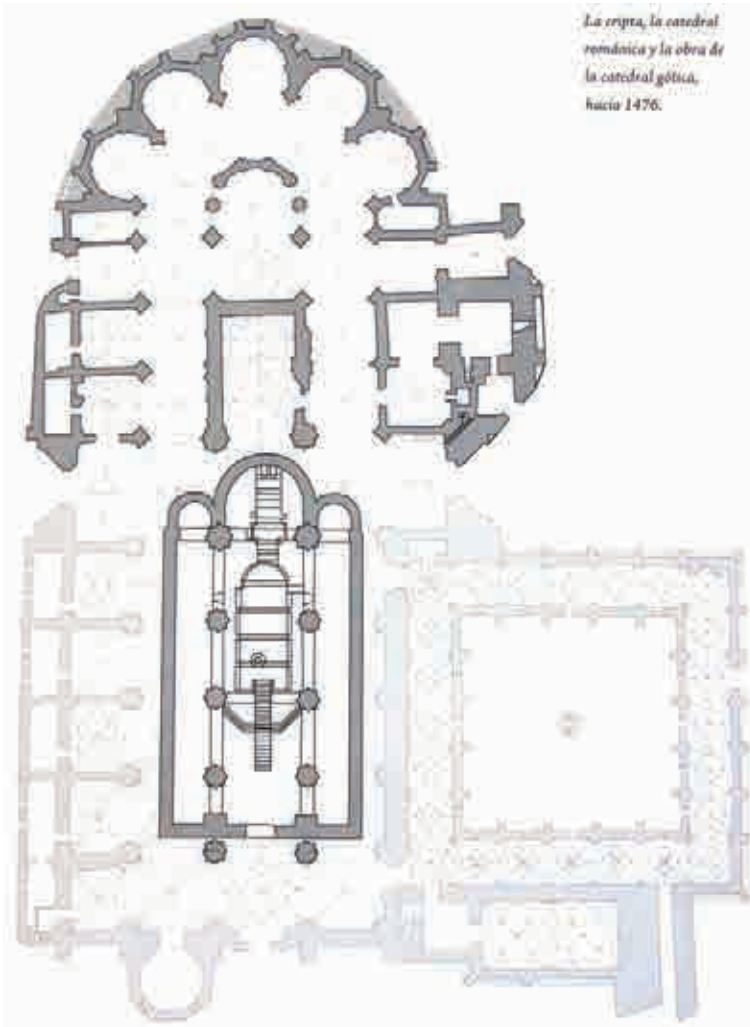


Fig. 1. Plan of the Crypt, the Romanesque Cathedral and the Gothic Cathedral, according to Rafael Martínez, ca. 1476, ("La lenta construcción de un gran templo. La catedral en la época gótica", en *La catedral de Palencia. Catorce siglos de historia y arte*, Burgos, 2011, p. 207).

The works were undertaken with great interest. In spite of it, they progressed very little along the 14th century due to scarcity of resources, several conflicts (particularly the confrontation between Pedro I and Enrique of Trastámara), and the schism that divided the Catholic Church. The seigniorial jurisdiction of the church of Palencia went through serious problems; its revenues were decreasing at the same time that royal and pontifical taxation increased and the disputes among the clergy themselves and between the bishop and the council multiplied, above all over the administration of justice and the government of the city, as well as over the issue of the *excusados* (people exempt from taxes)¹².

The Palentinian prelates subsequent to 1330 occupied important positions at the court. The royal chronicles register their stay by the monarchs on several occasions and their participation in diplomatic missions¹³. Juan Alfonso de Saavedra (1330–1342) was first the Chancellor Major of the Queen and then of the Prince. On his death the cathedral chapter elected their precentor, García Fernández, perhaps the brother of the former bishop, Juan, but his election was rejected. In his place, Clement VI appointed the bishop of Sigüenza, Pedro (1342–1343), who was in the service of the King in Algeciras when he was notified of his transfer to the archbishopric of Santiago.

In such a situation it is not surprising that the construction of the new temple was neglected. The works started at the chevet, so the radiating chapels are the oldest part of the new building. The historians agree that the first one to be built—or at least the first one to be completed—was that of the Virgen Blanca. In it there is a tomb, and, next to that, an inscription referring to the archdeacon Alfonso Rodríguez de Girón, who died in 1341, as founder of that chapel at his own expense. His patronage is also announced by the Girón's heraldry placed on the walls¹⁴. The funerary ensemble must

12 This topic is dealt with extensively in the article by C. REGLERO DE LA FUENTE, "La Iglesia catedral de Palencia en el siglo XIV (1313–1379): crisis y reformas", *Edad Media: revista de historia*, 7, 2005–2006, pp. 121–160.

13 *Ibidem*, pp. 147–148

14 It reads like this: "Aquí yace don Alfonso Rodríguez Girón, arcediano que fue de Carrión, que hizo esta capilla a su propia espensa. Que murió en el año de la era de 1379, que Jesucristo le perdone a él y a todos los muertos cuando allá fueran. Amén. Padre Nuestro rogado por él y por los muertos". A. FERNÁNDEZ DE MADRID, *Silva Palentina*, annotated by M. Vielva Ramos, vol. I, Palencia, 1932, p. 335; J. SAN MARTÍN PAYO, "Inscripciones en la catedral de Palencia," *Publicaciones de la Institución Tello Téllez de Meneses (PITTM)*, 33, 1972, p. 50; IDEM, "La capilla de Nuestra Señora la Blanca y dos restauraciones en la Catedral", *PITTM*, 37, 1976,

have been in quite an advanced state when its promoter died. On the list of the cathedral chaplaincies made in 1346, during the bishopric of Vasco Fernández de Toledo (1343–1353), it is mentioned as *altari Sanctae Mariae novae, cum perfecta fuerit*¹⁵. Although it is not documented, it seems likely that the dedication of the altar was in relation to the image of the Virgen Blanca which is to be found in that chapel; this sculpture could have been donated by the prelate on his arrival at the Palencia see from the archdiocese of Toledo, since it is a replica of the Virgen Blanca which presides over the altar in the choir of the Primate Cathedral and was very dear to the beneficiaries; also Vasco Fernández (d. 1362), who became archbishop of Toledo after his tenure in Palencia, requested to be buried before that Virgin's altar¹⁶. On the other hand, the keystone on the vault presents an image

pp. 160–196, especially 164–165; P. M. ALONSO RAMÍREZ y A. PALACIOS CASADEMUNT, “Inscripciones medievales en la ciudad de Palencia,” *Codex Aquilarensis*, 7, 1992, pp. 157–236, esp. p. 175.

The burial place of Don Juan Pérez de Acebes (d. 1371), the first worker canon of whom we have written proof, was located within the outer wall of the same chapel until 1906, when it was demolished. He is mentioned in the chapter minute of May 20, 1527 (R. MARTÍNEZ, “La lenta construcción de un gran templo...”, p. 210).

- 15 By 1346 the chaplaincies had reached a total of 81, and the disposable revenues were not enough to cover them all. Then Don Vasco ordered them to be reduced by half, establishing only 40 chaplains and a series of regulations that should be complied with. P. FERNÁNDEZ DEL PULGAR, *Teatro clerical, apostólico, y secular de las iglesias catedrales de España... Parte primera, contiene la historia secular, y eclesiástica de la ciudad de Palencia, y las vindicias del patron de esta Santa Iglesia San Antolín*, Madrid, 1679 (fac. ed., Palencia, 1981), vol. III, pp. 50 y 210; C. REGLERO DE LA FUENTE, “La Iglesia de Palencia. La Edad Media”, en T. EGIDO (coord.), *Historia de las diócesis españolas. Iglesias de Palencia, Valladolid y Segovia*, Madrid, 2004, pp. 5–60, specially, pp. 41–42.
- 16 The Virgen Blanca of Palencia is polychromatic alabaster and 135 cm. in height. G. WEISE, *Spanische Plastik aus sieben Jahrhunderten*, Reutlingen, 1925–1927, vol. I, pp. 31–33, and vol. II, pp. 70–72, already discusses the influence exerted by the Virgen Blanca on the sculptors who were active in Toledo; the success of this model prompted the commission of copies which are to be found in the city of Toledo itself (in the church of Santo Tomás and in the convent of El Carmen), in nearby towns, like Illescas, belonging to the episcopal lordship, and in other further away localities. Among the latter we can mention the image kept in the Museo Marés of Barcelona and that in the cathedral of Palencia. F. ESPAÑOL BERTRAN, “Mare de Deu amb el Nen”, in *Catàleg d'escultura i pintura medievals. Museu Frederic Marés*, Barcelona, 1994, pp. 243–244, suggests that Don Vasco Fernández was the donor of the image in Palencia. L. VASALLO TORANZO, “La Virgen Blanca”, in *Las Edades del Hombre. Memorias y Esplendores*, Salamanca, 1999, pp. 75–76.

of the Virgin with Child accompanied by a donor and a scutcheon chequy which, considering its colours, does not seem to be that of the Giróns but, perhaps, that of the Toledos; so we could think that it was Don Vasco who had the work finished¹⁷ (Figs. 2 and 3).



Fig. 2. Palencia Cathedral. Chapel of Nuestra Señora la Blanca. Photo Alberto Rodrigo and Miguel Ángel Valdivielso, Promecal.

17 It could also belong to his nephew, Bishop Don Gutierre, since some of his seals, with small checkered shields flanking his figure, are still kept in the chapter archives. (M. DE FIGURI, *Heráldica palentina. I. La ciudad de Palencia*, Palencia, 2005, p. 72).



Fig. 3. Virgen Blanca in the cathedrals of Palencia and Toledo. © Palencia Cathedral and Toledo Cathedral.

During the first years of his administration, this prelate concentrated his activities in the diocesan environment: he implemented the dispositions coming from the so-called “Palentinian council”, held in Valladolid in 1322, to reform the customs of the clergy and adequately address the piety of the faithful, and elaborated important documents, among them the one

that is now known as *Estadística Palentina (Palentinian Statistics)*, which stated the number of clerics necessary and sufficient in each of the churches of his diocese, and the *Cuaderno de tasación y partición tributaria (Book for taxation and tributary division)*¹⁸.

Many of the dispositions and statutes coming from the synods he convoked were aimed to solemnise the worship in the main church. Thus, in the 1346 constitutions there is a mention of how it is necessary to place a clock in the cathedral in order to know the divine hours and call to them by means of bell-ringing¹⁹.

His dedication to his diocese and his mettle to face conflicts, both within the church and the city, earned him the reputation of a good prelate²⁰. However, Don Vasco had to deal with some issues relating to the realm's political life, especially after Pedro I succeeded to the throne, and, besides the title of Chancellor for the Queen, he was appointed Grand Notary of the kingdom of León (1351–1353) and Grand Chancellor of Castile²¹. It meant a change in his occupation and had negative consequences for the episcopal office, since his long absences from his see contributed to the deterioration of its heritage. Because of that, his successor, Reginaldo, soon after taking possession of the Palencia see, reclaimed 8,000 gold florins from him and held him responsible for the awful state of the buildings, mills and vines owing to his or his representatives' neglect²².

Bishop Reginaldo de Maubernand (1353–1356), treasurer of the pope, was the second Palentinian bishop coming from the Avignon court

18 J. SAN MARTÍN PAYO, "La más antigua estadística de la ciudad de Palencia (a. 1345)", *Publicaciones de la Institución Tello Téllez de Meneses*, 7, 1950–1951, pp. 1–120.

19 A. GARCÍA Y GARCÍA, *Op. cit.*, p. 382.

20 A. VACA LORENZO, "D. Vasco, el muy buen perlado de Palencia: Su vida y obra al frente de este obispado (1343–1353)," in *Actas del III Congreso de Historia de Palencia. T. II. Historia Medieval: Fuentes documentales, Sociedad y Economía e Historia de las Instituciones*, Palencia, 1995, pp. 437–462.

21 C. REGLERO DE LA FUENTE, "La Iglesia catedral de Palencia en el siglo XIV...", p. 147, footnote 141, quotes only the first two positions; however, a letter about the cathedral chapter's property census, February 1355, mentions him as Grand Chancellor of Castile and of the Queen Doña María (A.C.T., E.7.K.1.11).

22 Finally, they agreed that he should hand in 4,000 florins, but Don Vasco ended up by paying only 1,000. C. REGLERO DE LA FUENTE, *Op. cit.*, p. 128.

in this century, after Pedro de Orfila, but he did not even set his foot on his diocese, thanks to the exemption from residence granted to him by the pontiff²³. The see was vacant for several months before Gutierre Gómez de Toledo (1357–1378) was promoted to the episcopal seat. Nephew of Vasco Fernández and a relation of the Álvarez de Toledo, he played his cards as best he could in royal and pontifical politics. In 1366 he decided to transfer from the side of Pedro I to that of Enrique of Trastámara. The latter awarded him several positions at the royal court and entrusted him with some diplomatic missions. Urban VI appointed him cardinal and his legate at the Medina del Campo assembly where the obedience to Rome or Avignon was to be decided. Once in Medina, Gutierre, perhaps out of the King's interests, ended up passing to the side of Clement VII, who rewarded him with the title of Cardinal of St. John and St. Paul, becoming thus a member of the Avignon court, where he died in January of 1391²⁴.

The last prelates of this century were Alfonso (1381–1382), who ruled the diocese for only one year, and Juan de Castromocho (1382–1397), who must have been a member of the Royal Council and, according to Pulgar, the chaplain of the Queen Catherine of Lancaster, but it does not appear as such in the chronicles or in the minutes of the Cortes²⁵. According to the archdeacon of Alcor, his tomb, with a recumbent statue dressed in pontifical vestment, was in the chapel of the Once Mil Vírgenes, now San José²⁶.

The social and economic problems, as well as the bishops' long absences and the lack of interest shown by most of them, resulted in the fact that, by the end of the century, scarcely the ambulatory with its radiating chapels was completed and that no reflection of the episcopal participation remains on its walls.

23 Pedro de Orfila (1306–1307), Vice-Chancellor of Clement V, had left for Avignon taking with him all the episcopal costumes and never returned.

24 F. J. FERNÁNDEZ CONDE, *Gutierre de Toledo, obispo de Oviedo (1377–89)*. *Reforma eclesiástica en la Asturias bajomedieval*, Oviedo, 1978, pp. 50–53.

25 He is mentioned as member of the royal council in ACP nº 375 (1391).

26 A. FERNÁNDEZ DE MADRID, *Op. cit.*, p. 267, transcribes his epitaph.

The Magnificent Works of Don Sancho de Rojas

The 15th century began with the bishopric of Don Sancho de Rojas²⁷. Like some of his predecessors and most of his successors, he belonged to one of the lineages that were on the rise following the triumph of the Trastámara dynasty and played an important role at the court. He was destined to the ecclesiastical career from very early. Thus, already in 1388 he enjoyed a canonry in Burgos and another one in Salamanca. His connection with the Valladolid royal court also started very early: the king himself recommended him to hold the canonries mentioned²⁸. In 1399, he travelled to Portugal on a diplomatic mission and in the following years he appears, together with the Infante Don Fernando, preparing war against the Muslims. He was an invaluable support at the failed siege of Setenil, but he showed considerable military capabilities at the capture of Antequera (1410). The hill where he set his camp is still known as the bishop's hill. Owing to the war merits shown by the prelate on this occasion, he was awarded the title of Count of Pernía, which would be inherited ever since by all the bishops of Palencia²⁹.

He always kept near the infante of Castile and future king of Aragon, and played an important role during John II's minority, acting as *de facto* regent especially from the death of Catherine of Lancaster (1418) until the 1419 Cortes of Madrid, when the monarch was declared of legal age.

27 After the death of Don Juan de Castromocho, in 1397, the see was vacant for some time and there are doubts about the moment when the bishopric of Sancho de Rojas began. In January of 1401 he signed documents as bishop of Palencia, but his appointment must have been earlier. A complete biographical profile of this prelate can be found in A. FRENKEN, "El trabajoso y difícil camino hacia la unión: Sancho Sánchez de Rojas, arzobispo de Toledo, y el papel clave que jugó en la extinción del gran cisma de Occidente en el reino de Castilla," *En la España medieval*, 32, 2009, pp. 51–83.

28 On 24 July, 1388, an age dispensation to receive dignities is granted to Sancho de Rojas, 19 years old, a canon law student of noble origin and canon of Burgos and Salamanca, recommended by the King of Castile. (Reg. Avin. 253, fols. 612v.–613r. Cf. V. BELTRÁN DE HEREDIA, *Bulario de la Universidad de Salamanca (1219–1249) I*, Salamanca, 1966, doc. n.º. 185.

29 A. FERNÁNDEZ DE MADRID, *Op. cit.*, p. 382. His activities close to the Infante Don Fernando can be followed in L. VALLA, *Historia de Fernando de Aragón*, Madrid, 2002, pp. 90–132.

Hernán Pérez de Guzmán states that he was a notable prelate, although he also criticises his excessive eagerness to rule and his ambition, well over what befitted his bishop's status³⁰. The images of him that have survived confirm that he had a high regard of himself and a strong desire for prominence. There is no other explanation for his ostentatious coat of arms, five blue stars in the form of an X in an argent field, which is always clearly visible on the works he sponsored. Besides, he had himself represented on several occasions, which was something unusual at the time even among the monarchs themselves³¹.

His stay in the diocese of Palencia, from early the 15th century to 1415, when he was confirmed as archbishop of Toledo, left an important imprint in the cathedral. His contribution to the building of this temple was, no doubt, determined not only by his desire that the edifice was in use again but also by his desire to perpetuate his memory.

His focus was on the continuation of the works from the sanctuary to the transept, paying particular attention to adorning the high chapel and the construction of the choir stalls. Regarding the latter, the coats of arms on the bishop's throne and the documentation tell us, without a doubt, of Don Sancho's patronage. When he was already archbishop of Toledo, the cathedral chapter of Palencia wrote a letter to him informing that the ensemble was already in an advanced stage and that it was urgent that he should send the 24,000 maravedís missing to complete the 2,000 florins he had promised and that were necessary to conclude the work³². The stalls cannot have been finished until 1429, as the chapter minutes register

30 H. PÉREZ DE GUZMÁN, *Generaciones y semblanzas*, ed. de A. Barrio, Madrid, 1998, p. 111.

31 The earliest portrait of him that has come down to us is the one that represents him, next to Henry III, in the capital E of a privilege granted by the King in 1406. G. DE ANDRÉS, "Dos retratos auténticos. Enrique III de Castilla y Sancho de Rojas, arzobispo de Toledo", *Goya*, 156 (May-June, 1980), pp. 324–327. More ambitious is the portrait in which he appears receiving his mitre from the Virgin herself, on the central panel of the altarpiece he commissioned for the monastery of San Benito, in Valladolid. M. V. HERRÁEZ, "Castilla, el concilio de Constanza y la promoción artística de don Sancho de Rojas", *Goya*, 334, January-March, 2011, pp. 5–19.

32 A. FERNÁNDEZ DE MADRID, *Op. cit.*, pp. 25–26. The letter is undated but it is obvious that it must be placed between 1415 and 1422, which is the period of Don Sancho's bishopric in Toledo. On the bishop's throne, the reader is referred to M. D. TEIJEIRA, "El trono episcopal de la catedral de Palencia. Un antecedente de los programas tipológicos en las sillerías corales góticas," *Archivo Español de Arte*, t. 74, nº 294, 2001, pp. 171–178.

several arrangements on behalf of the cathedral chapter in order to raise money to have them finished³³ (Fig. 4).



Fig. 4. Palencia Cathedral. Choir stalls. Photo by the author.

The Rojas arms, placed on the pillars of the doorway and the upper part of the archway to the original high chapel –converted later into a parish chapel dedicated to the Sacarium in early 16th century– speak clearly of an episcopal promotion. There is no doubt that the magnificent triumphal arch and the lower vault with decorated ribs that encloses the chapel were the work of a foreign master, who was a pioneer in the introduction of flamboyant formulas in Castile, and that he was hired on the bishop’s significant initiative, since his intensive contacts with the court and his

33 In 1424, the archdeacon of Carrión offered 5.000 maravedís to have them finished (ACP, *Actas Capitulares*, Libro 2, fol. 6r.). On 19 January, 1426, the chapter appointed some representatives to claim from Don Sancho’s executors a certain amount of florins he must have handed over for the stalls of the new choir (ACP, *Actas Capitulares*, Libro 4, fols. 7v-8r); finally, in 1429 they appointed the collectors of the 27.000 maravedís the archbishop had left for the stalls (ACP, *Actas Capitulares*, Libro 5, fol. 36 r); and late in the same year the chapter treated the issue of paying the master to whom the stalls had been commissioned (ACP, *Actas Capitulares*, Libro 6, fols. 29 v–30 r).

frequent travels to Aragon could have served as a vehicle for an innovative master to come to Castile³⁴ (Fig. 5).



Fig. 5. Palencia Cathedral. High chapel with the coats of arms of bishop Sancho de Rojas. Photo by the author.

After the study published by Rafael Martínez in 1989, there is no doubt about Isambart's intervention in the false vault of the high chapel of Palencia³⁵. What was a hypothesis has been reinforced with the study carried out by Ruiz Souza and García Flores, who highlight the stylistic relationship between this chapel and that of the Corporales in Daroca, where it is documented that Isambart and his team worked between 1417 and 1422³⁶. The master, probably of French origin, is first cited in the Palencia

34 We have developed the issue of the false vault in the high chapel more extensively in M. V. HERRÁEZ, "A mayor gloria del rey y del obispo. El patronazgo artístico de Sancho de Rojas", in M. D. TEIJEIRA PABLOS, M. V. HERRÁEZ ORTEGA and M. C. COSMEN (eds.), *Reyes y preladados. La creación artística en los reinos de León y Castilla (1050–1500)*, Madrid, 2014, pp. 341–369, esp. 351–365.

35 R. MARTÍNEZ, "La catedral y los obispos...", p. 52.

36 J. C. RUIZ SOUZA y A. GARCÍA FLORES, "Isambart y la renovación del gótico final en Castilla: Palencia, la Capilla del Contador Saldaña en Tordesillas y Sevilla. Hipótesis para el debate," *Anales de Historia del Arte*, 19, 2009, pp. 43–76, esp. 43–47.

documents in 1424. That is why there has been a tendency to date the construction of the false vault of the chapel after that year, between 1424 and 1429³⁷.

The problem arises if we want to combine the proposed chronology and the patronage of Sancho de Rojas, who died in 1422, since both the prelate's coats of arms and praying effigy proclaim his leading role in this project. It has been suggested that the works might have been paid with money coming from his will; but no source reflects that Don Sancho might have made a legal commitment to finance those works, though it does appear in connection with the choir stalls. On the other hand, there is no doubt that the iconographic programme of the chapel, both in the praying figures and the vault keystones, presided over by Christ the Judge, and in the musician angels studding the festoon ribs alludes to a funerary context. Everything suggests that the bishop must have been considering the idea of being buried in this place, but we know that two years after he was promoted to the Toledo archbishopric, in 1417, he made the decision of choosing the Primate Cathedral as his burial place, so that all his efforts were aimed at raising resources to build and endow his funerary chapel in the high church of Toledo³⁸. (Fig. 6).

37 Isambart's biography has been greatly extended over that last few years, and his itinerary is now almost complete. He has been identified with a Jehan Isambart, documented in 1399 at the works of the castle of Pierrefonds, commissioned by Louis de Orléans. His name appears in the Seu Vella of Lérida in 1410; in Zaragoza, in 1417; in Daroca, from 1417 to 1422; in Palencia, in 1424; in 1432 he was the "*cantero mayor del rey*" (king's master stonemason); he is cited in 1433 in connection with the new works in the Seville cathedral; and, finally, in 1438, the Palencia cathedral chapter rented out the house where master "Lisonbarte" was living. Among other works, the reader is referred to the following: J. IBÁÑEZ FERNÁNDEZ and J. CRIADO MAINAR, J., "El maestro Isambart en Aragón: la capilla de los Corporales de Daroca y sus intervenciones en la catedral de la Seo de Zaragoza," in *La piedra postrera (2). Comunicaciones, Simposium internacional sobre la catedral de Sevilla en el contexto del gótico final*, Salamanca, 2007, pp. 75–113; B. ALONSO RUIZ, "Los tiempos y los nombres del tardogótico castellano," in *La arquitectura tardogótica castellana entre Europa y América*, Madrid, 2011, pp. 43–80, esp. pp. 48–49; and J. IBÁÑEZ FERNÁNDEZ, "Con el correr del sol: Isambart, Pedro Jalopa y la renovación del gótico final en la Península Ibérica durante la primera mitad del siglo XV," *Biblioteca: estudio e investigación*, 26, 2011, pp. 201–226, esp. pp. 205–206 and 220–222. About his work in Palencia, we have made a new timeline proposal in M. V. HERRÁEZ, "A mayor gloria del rey y del obispo...", pp. 354–364.

38 M. V. HERRÁEZ, "La fundación y dotación de la capilla de San Pedro en la catedral de Toledo," *Laboratorio de Arte*, 25:1, 2013, pp. 79–96.



Fig. 6. Palencia Cathedral. Praying image of don Sancho de Rojas on the archway to the high chapel. Photo by the author.

In the years following Don Sancho's bishopric there were not the necessary conditions to embark on sumptuary works and, much less, if they were intended for the great name of a bishop who had not sponsored them. Therefore, we have raised, in another publication, the possibility that master Isambart had worked in Palencia before executing his commissions in Aragon (in Daroca and at the Seo of Zaragoza), and that, after finishing them, he had returned to the Carrión city to go on with his compromises with the cathedral chapter there³⁹.

When Sancho de Rojas moved to Toledo, in 1415, the sanctuary of the Gothic cathedral must have been completed, or almost, including the two bays which precede the high chapel right up to the transept contemplated in the initial project of the temple. The form of the pillars and the carving of the capitals, as well as the continuity of the ridge rib vaults and, above all, the need to have a space for the choir stalls, which he had decided to sponsor, point in that direction.

Besides, there is an important fact which has not been taken into consideration up to now: the stone vault which covered the sacristy –which can still be seen above the ceiling that divided its height into two levels in the 18th century in order to make a bedroom for the sacristans on the mezzanine⁴⁰– is a simple ribbed vault and its keystone is not decorated at all, but that of the adjoining space corresponding to the lower body of the tower, and with the same design, shows the coat of arms of Sancho de Rojas on its keystone and it is the same as the one displayed at the feet of the praying figure located in the entrance to the main chapel: seven stars instead of five, and now it includes an ecclesiastical tasselled hat. If the lower part of a tower which must have already been standing, as we shall see later, was vaulted, it must have been because the works of the temple had already reached its maximum height and they had decided to preserve it (Fig. 7).

39 M. V. HERRÁEZ, "A mayor gloria del rey y del obispo...", pp. 351–365.

40 F. DÍAZ-PINÉS, "La torre de la catedral de Palencia. Precisiones sobre su historia arquitectónica," in *Actas del III Congreso de Historia de Palencia*, vol. IV, Palencia, 1995, pp. 493–509.



Fig. 7. Palencia Cathedral. Vault on the lower part of the tower. Photo by the author.

The question that arises is if, at the same time Don Sancho designed the ornamentation for the chapel in order to make it into an appropriate burial place, he had contemplated to place the high altar of the cathedral somewhere else, further to the west of the church, so that both liturgies were held in two different settings. It seems logical that it was like that; however, there are no indications to support this theory, and his most immediate successors did not make a decision about it. Still in the year 1504 Diego de Deza commissioned the high altarpiece with the idea that it was placed in Don Sancho's chapel, and it was only in the framework of the liturgical-architectural project designed by Juan Rodríguez de Fonseca (1504–1514) where the transfer of the high chapel to the two bays of the nave located to the east of the crossing fitted in⁴¹.

41 J. YARZA LUACES, "Dos mentalidades, dos actitudes ante las formas artísticas: Diego de Deza y Juan Rodríguez de Fonseca," in *Jornadas sobre la catedral de Palencia*, Palencia, 1989, pp. 105–135.

Gutierre Álvarez de Toledo and the Reorganisation of the Chevets

From his see in Toledo Don Sancho kept abreast of the developments in Palencia⁴². Besides, his initiatives were continued by Alonso de Argüello (1415–1416), a prelate who moved in the same circle of friends, and was the confessor of the Infante Don Fernando, by then already king of Aragon, which is why he must have been quite near the Toledo archbishop's interests and maintained close diplomatic and artistic ties with the crown of Aragon⁴³. Nevertheless, he ran the diocese only for two years, and his successor, Rodrigo Velasco (1417–1423), drove the church to serious conflicts and financial difficulties⁴⁴; he led several clashes with the cathedral dean and chapter, who he treated with contempt and stripped of some property and rights. Not surprisingly he died in strange circumstances⁴⁵. It is possible that the construction of the cathedral suffered a downturn during his bishopric. This might have allowed master Isambart to be absent and execute his commissions in Zaragoza and Daroca. If it was not so and the works continued, they cannot have progressed much, considering those internal order problems and the scarce material resources. We have

42 In 1418 he sent the master builder of the Toledo cathedral, Álvar Martínez, and the master mason, Juan Esteban, to Saldaña (Palencia) in order to supervise the works at the castle and the towers (M. V. HERRÁEZ and S. DOMÍNGUEZ, *La actividad artística en la catedral de Toledo en 1418. El libro de Obra y Fábrica OF 761*, León, 2017, pp. 39–40). On 1st October of the same year he was one of the curator judges of the Palencia cathedral chapter appointed by Pope Martin V to recover the property and rights of which the chapter members had been unjustly stripped (ACP, Armario III, legajo 8, doc. 13. Cf. J. SAN MARTÍN PAYO, *Catálogo del archivo...*, p. 130).

43 In the codicil of his will he orders that the Archbishop of Toledo, Don Sancho de Rojas, should be paid 6,000 maravedís, which the latter had lent him in Segovia (Archivo catedral de Toledo, E.4.D.1.3).

44 A. POLANCO PÉREZ, *La catedral de Palencia en el siglo XV (1402–1470). Poder y comportamientos sociales a finales de la Edad Media*, Palencia, 2008, pp. 69–82.

45 On 27 May 1422, once the grievances the cathedral chapter had received from Don Rodrigo had been confirmed, the Holy See declared the chapter exempt from the bishop's jurisdiction (ACP, Armario III, legajo 4, doc. 10. Cf. J. SAN MARTÍN PAYO, *Catálogo del archivo...*, p. 10). On 1st May the members of the chapter turned to Sancho de Rojas with their list of the grievances they suffered from the bishop asking to give them remedy (ACP, Armario III, legajo 4, doc. 11. Cf. J. SAN MARTÍN PAYO, *Catálogo del archivo...*, p. 108).

information about it in a request, dated in 1419, to grant indulgences to those who would visit the cathedral on certain festivities and to those who *con sus manos tendidas ayuden a la reparación o a la fábrica de dicha iglesia*, which indicates that the prelate had the intention of going on with the works⁴⁶. The truth is that neither the documentation nor the coats of arms of these latter bishops witness any specific works carried out under their patronage.

Gutierre Álvarez de Toledo occupied the episcopal chair in 1423. He was the son of Hernán Álvarez de Toledo, Marshall of Castile, and Leonor de Ayala y Guzmán, a niece of the Chancellor López de Ayala. He was a doctor of the law and a learned man, and was described by Fernán Pérez de Guzmán as *onbre de gran coraçon, muy osado e atrevido, e en el meneo de su persona e en su fabla e maneras más parecía caballero que perlado*⁴⁷. In effect, like what happened with other bishops of high lineage, his attitudes and customs were similar to those of the nobility.

His ecclesiastical career started as archdeacon of Guadalajara and Toledo. He was an ambitious man, and already in 1401 he was aspiring to occupy the Toledan chair. He had to go through a trial as the suspected murderer, by poisoning, of the bishop of Sigüenza, Juan Serrano, who had given information against him⁴⁸. Apparently his promotion to the see of Palencia did not go either according to statutory regulations, but he remained there until 1439, when he was promoted to the archbishopric of Seville. His rise at the Court was also rapid: in 1428 he presided over the Royal Chancellery, and two years later he was a member of the Royal Council⁴⁹. His career was affected by the court intrigues and conspiracies

46 “would generously help repair or build the aforesaid church” (Vatican Secret Archives, Registri delle Suppliche, 129, fols. 169v.–170r.) Cf. S. RUIZ DE LOIZAGA, “Documentos vaticanos de la diócesis de Palencia en la Edad Media (siglos XIV–XV),” *Publicaciones de la Institución Tello Téllez de Meneses*, 79, 2008, pp. 347–364, esp. doc. II, pp. 373–374. The name of Martin V, written in the lower part of the document, as a consent signal, shows that the request was complied with by the Pontiff.

47 “a man of great heart, very courageous and daring, and in his manner of walking and speaking, as well as in his behaviour, he rather looked like a knight than a prelate” F. PÉREZ DE GUZMÁN, *Generaciones y semblanzas*, Madrid, 1979, pp. 103–104.

48 On this matter see the extensive and detailed study of J. M. NIETO SORIA, *Un crimen en la corte. Caída y ascenso de Gutierre Álvarez de Toledo, señor de Alba (1376–1446)*, Madrid, 2005.

49 P. CARRILLO DE HUETE, *Crónica del halconero de Juan II de Castilla*, ed. J. DE M. Carriazo y Arroquia, Madrid, 1946, cap. LXV (from now on, *Halconero*).

against Juan II and in favour of the kings of Aragon and Navarre. Thus, in 1430, when the King distributed some villages among the men loyal to the Royalist cause, Don Gutierre received Alba de Tormes, and so he initiated the lineage of the Albas⁵⁰. Nevertheless, when the misgivings about the king's favourite, Álvaro de Luna, started, some noblemen abandoned the king's side and moved to the faction of the Infantes of Aragon. Among them was the bishop, who was imprisoned as a traitor in February 1432 and was not released until September of the same year⁵¹.

Regarding the organisation of his church, he drew up new statutes, some of them really important, like *De correctione et punitione*, and was able to regularise the annexation of loans to the cathedral chapter board.⁵² There are records of his conciliatory work and his concern to ensure institutional normalisation after his predecessor's disastrous management of the episcopal see⁵³.

His activities close to the Court kept him away from his see on numerous occasions, and his coat of arms cannot be seen on the cathedral walls, which is why we could deduce that he did not exercise a direct patronage over the works of the Gothic building. However, there are facts that tell us about his interest in obtaining support to continue the construction of the temple.

Thus, in 1426, the bishop and chapter of the Palencia cathedral sent the pope a letter requesting a bull granting indulgences to those who would collaborate in the repair and preservation of the San Antolín cathedral and to those who would visit it on certain festivities. The letter says that the church, because it was so old and in ruins, had been demolished, and its rebuild and repair had been started "in extremely sumptuous works [...] and for that rebuild and repair this church's resources are not sufficient, but so that we can progress in obtaining those resources and preserve the said temple the

50 He built a hospital, the monastery of San Jerónimo and the palace of Alba de Tormes. In 1446 his nephew Fernando Álvarez de Toledo, lord of Salvatierra, inherited this village and was the first count of Alba.

51 C. REGLERO DE LA FUENTE, "La Iglesia de Palencia. La Edad Media," in T. EGIDO (coord.), *Historia de las diócesis españolas. Iglesias de Palencia, Valladolid y Segovia*, Madrid, BAC, vol 19, 2004, p. 24. On 26 October 1432, Don Gutierre came into Ciudad Rodrigo, where the Court was and obtained the royal pardon (*Halconero*, cap. XCVIII; P. FERNÁNDEZ DEL PULGAR, *Historia secular y eclesiástica...*, p. 105).

52 T. CARBAJAL IBÁÑEZ, "El estatuto capitular de corrección y punición", *Publicaciones de la Institución Tello Téllez de Meneses*, 59, 1989, pp. 525–543.

53 A. POLANCO PÉREZ, *Op. cit.*, p. 82.

alms of the Christian faithful are very welcome; thus, in the same way as it has been started, the said church can be properly repaired and preserved”⁵⁴.

Although the qualifiers applied to the Romanesque building cannot be taken at face value, it seems logical that, by that time, part of it must have been demolished. The documentation allows us to know, rather accurately, the location occupied by the body of the church consecrated in 1219 and the structure it had. The nave was as wide as the Gothic one and the aisles were slightly narrower than the current ones. The western closure wall was a little before the end of the last but one Gothic bay⁵⁵. However, we do not know so accurately where the chevet of the Late Romanesque temple was located or what it was like, as it has not been excavated and hardly any facts are provided by the sources, but we can try and place it in relation to the new Gothic project⁵⁶. There is no doubt that it would be larger and located further to the east than the sanctuary of the possible church built in the 11th century, and this, on its turn, must have completely covered the remains of the Visigothic crypt⁵⁷. Therefore, if we take into consideration that such a crypt lies under the transept, it is clear that the chevet of the temple consecrated in the early 13th century invaded the area of what is currently the high chapel.

54 “(...) *con una obra enormemente suntuosa (...) y para dicha reedificación y reparación los recursos de esta iglesia no son suficientes, sino que para avanzar en conseguir dichos recursos y para la conservación de dicho templo son muy oportunas las limosnas de los fieles cristianos, de manera que dicha iglesia, tal como se ha comenzado, pueda repararse debidamente, a la vez que conservar lo reparado*”. (Vatican Secret Archives, Registri delle Suppliche, 197, fol. 195r). Cf. S. RUIZ DE LOIZAGA, *Op. cit.*, doc. 15, p. 377.

55 See R. MARTÍNEZ, “Tiempos oscuros. La catedral...”, pp. 164–196, esp. pp. 189–192. His ground plan is wrong, though, as he places the western wall a bay further to the west than it really was. The same author, in “La lenta construcción de un gran templo...”, p. 207, gives a different version about the location of the hypothetical floor plan of the Romanesque cathedral in the Gothic temple: we think that the wall of the western portal is correctly located but the chevet should extend further to the east.

56 It has always been assumed that it must have been a chevet with three tiered apses; however, there could have been one apse with apsidioles, in the manner of some French cases and certain Spanish temples which are not preserved and present a patronage relation with Palencia. C. COSMEN, “Paisajes artísticos velados. La cabecera románica de la catedral de Sigüenza y la posible difusión del modelo,” *De Arte*, 15 (2016), pp. 7–32, esp. pp. 30–31.

57 In fact, there is no certainty about the existence of a church previous to the one that was consecrated in 1219, but all the authors understand that the Visigothic crypt and the extension of it made in 1035 must have been under a temple structure promoted by Sancho of Navarre. R. MARTÍNEZ, “Tiempos oscuros. La catedral...”, p. 186.

Also, in some cases of Gothic constructions in which, like in Palencia, the width of the nave of the previous building was respected and the documentation alludes to the new construction as “repair”, the chevet was given a much larger width and depth starting from the pre-existent transept. Examples of this are the cathedral of Burgo de Osma, the renovation of which started in the 1230s in the framework of a Romanesque building, and the cathedral of León, where the Gothic temple replaced a church which was being built in 1200⁵⁸. If, in the cathedral of Palencia, we form the hypothesis that the project had been to use the same space of the transept in both buildings –Romanesque and Gothic– and remember that the transept of the project designed in the 14th century was thought to be a bay further to the east than it finally was built, we could conclude that the Romanesque sanctuary would virtually reach the chevet and occupy the current high chapel entirely (Fig. 8).

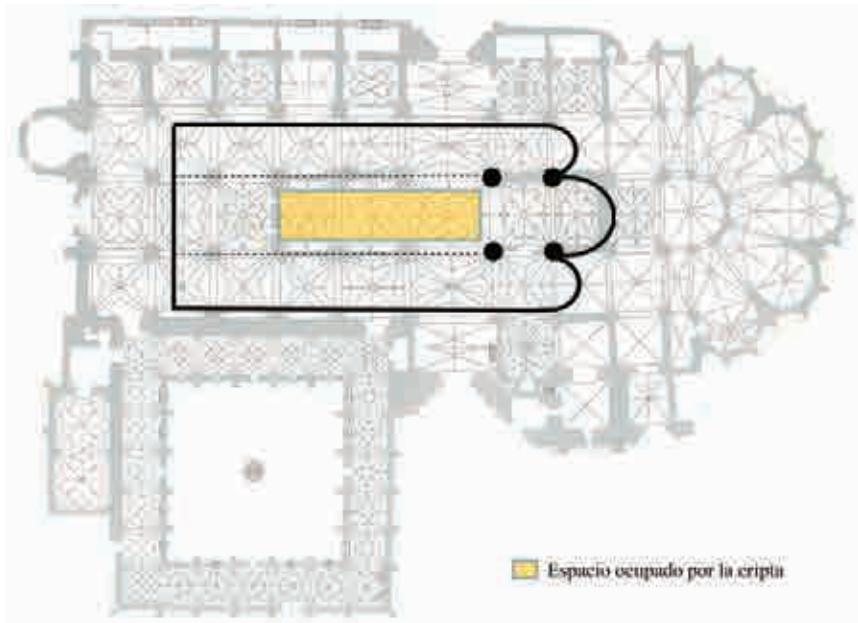


Fig. 8. Palencia Cathedral. Plan with the hypothetical place of the church consecrated in 1219, according to the author.

58 M. V. HERRÁEZ, “La construcción del templo gótico”, en J. YARZA, M. V. HERRÁEZ y G. BOTO (coords.), *La catedral de León en la Edad Media*, León, 2004, pp. 145–176.

Consequently, it is not surprising that the request for help sent to the pope in 1426 mentions the demolition undergone by the old church, as we have seen that at the time the works had already progressed as far as the level of the transept initially projected.

In another letter, dated on 12 May 1432, the bishop explains that the great works started by his predecessors could not have been continued till then owing to lack of money; he asks for help of the whole diocese, encouraging the faithful to give their donations when alive, and announces the creation of a confraternity in honour of God, the Virgin and St. Antolín. The members of this confraternity would give their alms for the works while alive⁵⁹.

The years of Don Gutierre's bishopric coincide with the period when Isambart was in Palencia and, also, with his absence to work in the new high church of Seville⁶⁰. In 1432 he was the king's master stonemason (*cantero mayor del rey*) and in 1433 he was already in the capital of Andalusia; therefore, he could have left the works of Palencia during a break in the activities owing to lack of resources and coinciding with the imprisonment of the bishop, which has been alluded to above. Once the decoration of the high chapel was finished, we do not know what the master's job was in the Palencia see, but it is true that there is a last reference to him, dated on 21 January 1437, in relation to some chapter's houses he had vacated⁶¹.

The construction cannot have progressed much during Don Gutierre's bishopric. We have already mentioned that, by 1426, it had reached the Romanesque church and, because of that, the latter had been partially demolished. It is possible that, in the 30s, some vaults were finished and it is

59 ACP, Histórico, 837, fol. 55r. Cf. T. GARCÍA CUESTA, "La catedral de Palencia según los protocolos", *Boletín del Seminario de Estudios de Arte y Arqueología*, t. 20, 1954, pp. 91–142, esp. pp. 93–94.

60 In the Palencia chapter minutes he is cited for the first time on 11 November 1424, and he is said to be a stonemason (ACP, Actas Capitulares, Libro 3, fol. 65r.). The only previous appointment for the same job corresponds to 11 November 1415, and it was for Juan Fernández de Estalaia (ACP, Actas Capitulares, Libro 2, fol. 38r.), the same person that held the position of carpenter in 1424 and of stonemason again in 1428 (ACP, Actas Capitulares, Libro 5, fol. 23r.). No other minutes between them are extant, except for those of 1426, in which no appointments are registered.

61 ACP, Actas Capitulares, Libro 7, fol. 32r.

likely that the choir stalls were definitively placed and the stone retrochoir was designed.⁶² This hypothesis is supported by the formal analysis of those elements and some other information relating to the definitive installation of the choir structure. For example, in 1436 master Gallarte had been commissioned to build the organs and some fabric had been bought to cover the windows which were above them; in 1437 the cathedral chapter forced themselves to give 8,000 maravedís to the master so that he would finish them, and in early 1438 they sent for the organ player to tune it⁶³. Soon after, in 1440, all necessary steps were taken to commission the stone works, and the chapter ordered the stalls master to send for the stonemason, who had left for Navarre, and try alongside the “*canónigo obrero*”, Juan de Rabanal, to make the stonemason happy.⁶⁴ It seems that some disputes had risen in relation to the retrochoir works (its walls are, no doubt, those that close the sides of the current high chapel), and, as a consequence, the stonemason had left the city of Palencia (Fig. 9).

Obviously, by then they had decided to prolong the chevet of the temple, giving it one more bay and transferring the transept to the west. It seems logical that the choir stalls had been located initially on the bay adjoining the high chapel or, at least, that it was the original plan⁶⁵. Its eventual placement, leaving an intermediate space between both liturgical settings, could have responded to the intention of allowing the faithful to come near the high altar, at least visually. Besides, in the 30s, when the old Romanesque chevet was demolished and the works in the transept area had come to a standstill, it was necessary to enable an access way to the new building and the new sanctuary, which would entail the decision

62 In 1519 Pedro de Guadalupe was commissioned to adapt the choir stalls to the current location, according with the change in placement of the high chapel.

63 The records on the construction of the new organs keep on recurring between 1436 and 31 January 1438, when they hired Juan de Toledo to play the organs (major and minor) whenever he was required to do it for an annual salary of 1,600 maravedís and 4 “*car-gas*” of wheat. ACP, Actas Capitulares, Libro 7, fols. 2r., 15r., 19r., 35v., 51r. and 51v.

64 ACP, Actas Capitulares, Libro 8, fol. 72v.

65 About the placement of choir stalls relative to the high altar in medieval spanish cathedrals, see M. D. TEIJEIRA PABLOS, “Aziendo presbiterio mui capaz. El “modo español” y el traslado de coros góticos en la España moderna”, in F. VILLASEÑOR et alt. (eds.), *Choir Stalls in Architecture and Architecture in Choir Stalls*, Cambridge, 2015, pp. 1–28, specially 6–10.

of clearing the transverse aisle, now called “false transept”, to allow the faithful to move around.



Fig. 9. Palencia Cathedral. Epistle wall of the current high chapel, old choir space. Photo by the author.

The pillar that can still be seen above the vault on the south side of the church, between the current sacristy and the ante-room leading to it, clearly indicates that there was a change in the original project after the construction of the transept had been started: it was decided to demolish part of what had been built in order to add a new bay to the chevet; so the choir was entirely included in it⁶⁶. The shape of the capitals which were finally carved on the pillar that had been raised also testifies to it. It was carved at a height equal to that of the other capitals in the naves of the church but with no decoration (Fig. 10).

66 This change in the project was already mentioned by L. TORRES BALBÁS, *Arquitectura gótica*, col. “Ars Hispaniae”, vol. VII, Madrid, 1952, pp. 155–156.



Fig. 10. Palencia Cathedral. Pillar over the ceiling in the epistle aisle. Photo by the author.

Also, as Díaz-Pinés indicates, it is very likely that one of the basic reasons for the change in the project might have been the preservation of the tower⁶⁷. From the viewpoint of the project it is inexplicable that the tower was included in the ground plan of the Gothic cathedral, unless it was a pre-existing element. From a formal viewpoint, some elements suggest that it is an older building, whose lower body was vaulted during the time of Don Sancho de Rojas, as has been indicated above, and was

67 F. DÍAZ-PINÉS MATEO, “La torre de la catedral de Palencia. Precisiones sobre su historia arquitectónica,” in M. V. CALLEJA GONZÁLEZ (coord.), *Actas del III Congreso de Historia de Palencia*, vol. 4, 1995, pp. 493–510; and “La catedral gótica de Palencia: un esquema de las transformaciones de la Bella Desconocida,” in *Medievalismo y neomedievalismo en la arquitectura española*, Ávila, 1994, pp. 117–143, esp. p. 125. In his former article the author suggests that it may be the tower rebuilt after the disturbances following the death of Sancho IV, and that, demolishing it in order to give a graceful way out to the cathedral transept, would have meant to destroy a symbol of the bishop’s lordship and of the pre-eminence of the episcopal see over the city, which was being questioned at the time.

consolidated from the mid-15th century through the re-growth of its walls and the thickening of its buttresses⁶⁸.

Don Gutierre is the only prelate who we know was concerned about the works in the cathedral and whose heraldry does not appear anywhere in the temple. We can think that his political adventures and the goings-on he was involved with might have condemned him to a sort of *damnatio memoriae*; the truth is that there is no evidence that a part whatsoever had been built, but we must bear in mind that no chapter minutes of the period between 1430 and 1436 are preserved, and they are the fundamental years of Don Gutierre's relationship with the cathedral⁶⁹. In the chapel nearest to the south transept, which was dedicated to St. Catherine and is the ante-room to the sacristy, there are blank shields on the diagonal ribs of the tierceron vault. On 23 November 1440 it was ordered to pay 90,000 maravedís to Gómez Díaz for the chapel he had built "*junto a la puerta de las gradas e por la cortina*" ("next to the step-door and for the curtain") while they decided to put off the payment of another 4,000 maravedís they owed to him "*porque fiso de más*" ("because he made more than he should") until the works were completely finished⁷⁰. At this time Gutierre Álvarez de Toledo was already Seville's archbishop, but his successor in Palencia had been appointed six months before, which is why the chapel of Santa Catalina could have been executed under Don Gutierre's impetus, and the blank coats of arms might have been destined to contain the episcopal arms which were never depicted in them.

We do not know with certainty which was the "step-door", or if it belonged to the old or the new church, since at present none of the accesses to the cathedral has any steps, but it seems logical that it was the nearest to the chapel of Santa Catalina⁷¹. The truth is that few years after making

68 Among other places, this thickening of the tower walls can be noticed on the vault of the adjoining chapel, current sacristy, whose ribs are eaten away on the south side.

69 After this date there is information about the works. Besides that referring to the organs, we find, for example, that in 1438 Juan Rodríguez received several payments for the works on the clock (ACP, Actas Capitulares, Libro 7, fols. 51r. and v.), and in 1440 some stained-glass windows were being made in Burgos, financed, partially, with the money left by Pedro González de Becerril in his will (ACP, Actas Capitulares, Libro 8, fols. 10r. and 65r.)

70 ACP, Actas Capitulares, Libro 8, fol. 71r.

71 Close to the Puerta de los Novios -that is the one nearest to the high chapel- archaeological survey of the late 20th century unearthed Roman structures at almost the same level of the present-day square, which rules out the possibility that that was the *Puerta*

the payment to the master builder, the square was being replenished with earth, which suggests that, in this area, there was a slope between the temple floor and the outside.

The Promoting Impetus of Don Pedro de Castilla

Quite different from the previous one is the case of the Bishop Pedro de Castilla (1440–1460), the illegitimate son of the Infante Don Juan and grandson, therefore, of Pedro I the Cruel. Despite he belonged to the lineage of the dethroned king, with the protection of his cousin the Queen Catherine of Lancaster he managed to get into the Court and start a brilliant ecclesiastical career which allowed him to sustain his numerous offspring. Juan II kept him as an adviser in his close circle, supported him on his promotion to the see of Osma, and, in 1435, he attempted to persuade the Sevillian cathedral chapter into supporting his candidacy for the archbishopric of Seville, this time unsuccessfully. Nevertheless, the political drift of Castile at the end of the 30s made Don Pedro think that it would be more beneficial for his career to get away from the king and side up with the rebel nobility⁷². Certainly his change of sides might have enabled his promotion to a diocese richer than Osma, Palencia, whose bishopric was bestowed on him by the pope on 6 April 1440; however, he disappeared from political life very soon and is cited in the royal milieu only in 1452, when he appears again as as *oidor* (Judge) of the *Audiencia* and member of the Royal Council, which indicates a certain reconciliation with Juan II, after the death of whom, occurred in July of 1454, he would go away from political life definitively⁷³.

de las Gradass. I am grateful to Dr. Gutiérrez Baños for the information concerning the mentioned archaeological excavations.

72 O. VILLARROEL, “El reflejo léxico de las posturas políticas: vaivenes políticos de un prelado de sangre regia”, *Espacio, tiempo y forma, Serie III, Historia Medieval*, 20 (2007), pp. 265–287.

73 IDEM, “Pedro de Castilla (1394–1461): un obispo de Osma y sus relaciones con la Monarquía”, *Celtiberia*, 95, (2001), pp. 133–162; P. DE FORTEZA, M. E. GONZÁLEZ DE FAUVE and I. J. LAS HERAS, “Los cargos eclesiásticos y religiosos como estrategia de recuperación del poder de los descendientes de Pedro I de Castilla”, *En la España Medieval*, 24, (2001), pp. 239–257. The register of the deeds of his property can be found

The fact that he left courtly activities may have enabled him to take on a more active role in his see than other prelates, and certainly in the chapter minutes corresponding to his bishopric there is abundant documentation relating to the works on his church. There is not documentary evidence that he was personally involved in the construction of the new temple, but his coat of arms –shields of Castile and León divided by a bend of vert swallowed by dragons' heads of gold– can be admired on different vaults, like those on the side aisles in the chevet bay before the transept. They are ribbed vaults with tiercerons, which is why they differ from the others built until then, on which the model followed was the ribbed vault with a ridge.

The vault of the same bay corresponding to the nave also shows a shield with Don Pedro's arms, although its characteristics do not agree with the time of his bishopric. It covers the west bay of the current high chapel and its design of liernes and cambers is like the adjoining vault, on which appears the shield of the bishop Pedro Gómez Sarmiento (1525–1534). In effect, both were remade in the 16th century, once it was decided to close the choir space on the east side and carry the high altar there. The only justification to place Don Pedro's heraldry on one of the keystones is that it might have occupied the same place on the original vault and there was a desire to maintain the prelate's memory. Therefore, the vaults built in the mid-15th century were renovated to adapt them to the models in use at the time, like those that already closed the transept, and highlighted the pre-eminence of the space destined for a new high chapel⁷⁴ (Fig. 11).

in ACP, Actas Capitulares, Libro 22, fol. 8 (Cf. S. FRANCIA LORENZO, *Archivo Capitular de Palencia. Catálogo. Actas Capitulares (1468–1500). Serie II*, t. I, Palencia, 1989, doc. 2480).

74 In his annotations to the *Silva palentina*, Matías Vielva says that on 24 July 1534 the coat of arms of the Castillas that was crowning the high chapel appeared on the floor and it was cracked. After a long dispute, it was decided to replace the arms of the one who must have been responsible for the construction of that vault (A. FERNÁNDEZ DE MADRID, *Op. cit.*, p. 408, nota 2). If this is true, the one that can be seen now would be the third shield of Don Pedro's placed there, after the one from the mid-15th century and the other that replaced it when the vault was modified in the mid-16th century.



Fig. 11. Palencia Cathedral. Vaults in the aisles and the nave, bay to the east of the transept, with the coat of arms of bishop Pedro de Castilla. Photo by the author.

Pedro de Castilla's heraldry suggests that the last bay of the chevet was finished under his bishopric. His arms are a little away from that environment only in the hallway of Puerta de los Novios. In this case it is an eight-piece vault, simpler in its design than those dealt with before, and the prelate's shield on its keystone helps to fix a timeline on which there are some discrepancies.

The abundant information on its construction states that, in effect, in the 40s the building activities were focused around the transept and in tidying the square which its south arm leads to.

The progress of the construction towards the west made it necessary to demolish some parts of the Romanesque building which were still standing. Thus, on 30 September 1443 the old Corpus chapel was ordered to be knocked down in order to make enough width for the entrance to the church⁷⁵; on 16 April 1445 the cathedral chapter ordered to knock down an arch in order to make the foundation of a new pillar⁷⁶; on 21 August of that same year it was decided to seek a new location for the empress's grave, which was in the Magdalena chapel⁷⁷, and four days later a commission was created that would change the sacarium and see how the transept could be fitted out⁷⁸.

By 1443 the new Corpus Christi chapel had already been vaulted since, on 11 October, the cathedral chapter gave the order of transferring to it the chaplaincy which had been in the old chapel and with the same dedication⁷⁹. The person in charge of the works was Gómez Díaz de Burgos, a master who had been in contact with the chapter at least from 1430 and would remain at their service until his death, in 1469⁸⁰. He must have been

75 ACP, Actas Capitulares, Libro 10, fol. 59v. Three days later there was an agreement to sell the doors and the timber of the Corpus chapel which had been demolished, on the condition that the person who bought it would dump it at his own expense (ACP, Actas Capitulares, Libro 10, fol. 60v.).

76 ACP, Actas Capitulares, Libro 12, fol. 6v.

77 The empress was Doña Urraca, the daughter of Alphonse VII, married to García Ramírez of Navarre. The agreement was made on 1st August 1459 (ACP, Actas Capitulares, Libro 20, fol. 12v.). Eventually, the tomb of Doña Urraca was installed in the high chapel, the current chapel of the Sagrario.

78 "adobado". ACP, Actas Capitulares, Libro 12, fol. 54r.

79 ACP, Actas Capitulares, Libro 10, fol. 60v.

80 The most complete monography on this master is still R. MARTÍNEZ, "Gómez Díaz de Burgos, maestro mayor de la catedral de Palencia," *Publicaciones de la Institución Tello Téllez de Meneses*, 58 (1988), pp. 417–426. M. VIELVA RAMOS, *Op. cit.*, p. 17,

the author of the tierceron vaults mentioned above, as on 19 May 1444 the chapter agreed to give him whatever was necessary to cover “the chapel that is next to the new chapel where lies the treasurer from Valladolid”⁸¹, and on 22 of September of the same year, the master committed himself to finish the new chapel he was building between the choir and the Corpus Christi chapel⁸². That “new chapel where lies the treasurer from Valladolid” must be the Corpus chapel, as on 9 October 1443, the chapter granted the new Corpus Christi chapel to Luis Díaz de Alcalá so that he and his descendants could be buried there in return for their contribution to the works of the church⁸³. Therefore, if the vault the stonemason Gómez Díaz was building between the choir and that chapel was the chapel in the bay previous to the north transept, we must think that, at the time, the Corpus chapel was in the place occupied at present by the chapel of San Jerónimo and not that of San Sebastián, as has been maintained since Matías Vielva identified them.

At the same time that the spaces already built were vaulted, the access to the new temple was also being prepared. We have already indicated that in 1443 the old chapel of Corpus Christi was knocked down to widen the entrance. The documentary sources also show that in the same year the square was being replenished with earth,⁸⁴ and the arch of the Puerta de las Gradas was made in 1459⁸⁵.

says he was working for the cathedral in 1428, but the first documented date is 1430 and it refers to the works of the city walls (ACP, Actas Capitulares, Libro 5, fol. 37r.). In fact, we do not know when he got the position of master of the cathedral works. The first minutes after that date are from 1436, and that year Juan Fernández del Sagrario was appointed as stonemason, the same as in 1437 and from 1440 to 1442 (ACP, Actas Capitulares, Libro 7, fols. 21r. and 45r.; Libro 8, fol. 70r.; Libro 9, fols 18r. and 42 r.). In 1443 it is Alfonso Martínez Molinero who appears as stonemason in connection with the jobs chosen on every 11 of November, but Gómez Díaz is cited in the chapter minutes four days later as master builder of the stoneworks in the church, with an annual salary of 1,000 maravedís, plus 25 maravedís for each day he carved himself (ACP, Actas Capitulares, Libro 10, fol. 62r.).

81 “*La capilla que está junto a la capilla nueva donde yace el tesorero que fue de Valladolid*” (ACP, Actas Capitulares, Libro 11, fol. 6v.).

82 ACP, Actas Capitulares, Libro 11, fol. 11r.

83 ACP, Actas Capitulares, Libro 10, fol. 60r. There is no documentary evidence but the coincidence of information suggests that Luis Díaz de Alcalá was the same person mentioned as treasurer in Valladolid.

84 On 27 September and 2 October agreements were made to finance the carts and pay the workmen in charge of this task (ACP, Actas Capitulares, Libro 10, fol. 59v.).

85 ACP, Actas Capitulares, Libro 20, fol. 4v.

The first library for the cathedral was made at this time. The work was commissioned to Abraham and his son Farache, Moorish carpenters, in 1447. Given the craftsmen's expertise and the materials cited in the contract, it is likely that an already existing room was fitted out with flooring, a ceiling and, perhaps, wood bookcases for the books⁸⁶. Also, in 1486 Juan de Ayllón was granted a chapel of which it is said that it had been a sacristy (*sacristanía*) and then a library, so that he could open an arch and be buried in it⁸⁷. Everything suggests that the space dedicated to the library for barely 40 years must have been what the sacristy is currently⁸⁸.

As we can see, the chapter minutes from this period are dotted with records about the works, procurement of materials for them and master builders and stonemasons who were employed at the site. In connection with this we must point out that Pedro Jalopa was appointed as master major at the same time as Gómez Díaz held the same office and with the same salary. This fact has been a subject of great interest, as he is a stonemason who had worked at different places with Isambart's team and had arrived in Palencia after exercising his craftsmanship at the chapel of Don Álvaro de Luna in the cathedral of Toledo⁸⁹. We do not know why he was sent for and why two master builders were hired at the same time, but what is true is that Jalopa disappears after two months, which is why his intervention cannot have been very significant⁹⁰.

It seems that, in the end, the transept had been finished, except for the vaults, the windows traceries and the decoration of the façades. The pace of the works had been quite different owing to various circumstances, but there is no doubt that the personality of the prelates and their greater or lesser dedication to their see were decisive factors. Their patronage is highlighted, mainly, through their heraldry, which, like a certificate of work completion, is pointing out the various building campaigns (Fig. 12).

86 ACP, Actas Capitulares, Libro 14, fol. 5r.

87 ACP, Actas Capitulares, Libro 32, fol. 27r.

88 M. D. TEJEIRA PABLOS, "Las librerías de la catedral de Palencia," in M. D. CAMPOS et al., *Librerías catedralicias. Un espacio del saber en la Edad Media y Moderna*, León-Santiago de Compostela, 2013, pp. 253–264, esp. pp. 253–256.

89 A. YUSTE GALÁN, "La introducción del arte flamígero en Castilla: Pedro Jalopa, maestro de los Luna," *Archivo Español de Arte*, vol 77, n° 307 (2004), pp. 291–300.

90 The contract was made on 16 September 1443 (ACP, Actas Capitulares, Libro 10, fol. 58v.). Two months later Gómez Díaz is appointed alone (ACP, Actas Capitulares, Libro 10, fol. 62r.). There are no records about Pedro Jalopa after that date, which is why it is possible that he had died. A. YUSTE GALÁN, *Op. cit.*, esp. pp. 296–298.

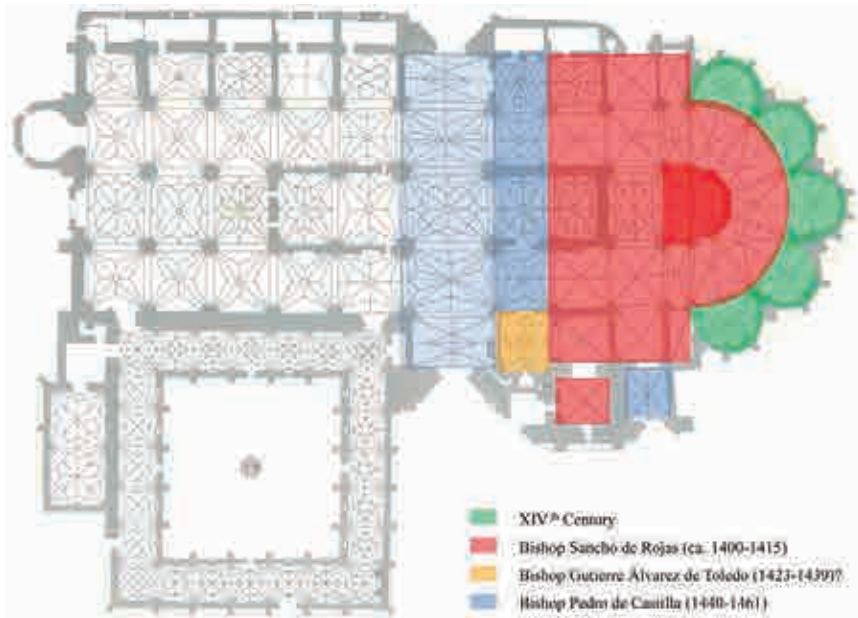


Fig. 12. Palencia Cathedral. Plan with the different stages in the construction of the chevet, according to the author.

The 1460s, under the bishopric of Don Gutierre de la Cueva, were marked by great conflicts with the city council and the plague, which explains why the records only allude to the tower, the bells and the whitening of the cloister chapels⁹¹. The construction cannot have progressed greatly in the time of Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, who left his arms on the door of Santa María and on the door to the cloister. It was not until 1484 that the decision was made to employ on the chapel of San Enrique, currently the Purísima, the 30,000 maravedís bequeathed by Pedro de Castilla to the construction of the church⁹², and the work was not contracted with Bartolomé Solórzano until 1498. On the central keystone of the vault already appears the coat of arms of Brother Alonso de Burgos, the bishop of Palencia at the time, who gave the definitive push to the construction of the cathedral.

91 ACP, Actas Capitulares, Libro 26, fol. 16r. On the one hand, it could have been a sanitary measure; and on the other, it indicates that there was no intention to destroy the old cloister.

92 ACP, Actas Capitulares, Libro 31, fol. 36v.